

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 04298 160717Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----160722Z 014703 /16

R 160558Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2605
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 4298

EXDIS

GENEVA FOR ASST. SECRETARY ATHERTON

PAKISTAN FOR CHARGE

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, US, PK
SUBJ: CONVERSTAION WITH PAKISTAN AMBASSADOR TO IRAN TO
U.S.-PAK RELATIONS

1. CURRENT STATE OF U.S. -PAK RELATIONS WAS DISCUSSED
DURING PRIVATE CONVERSATION MAY 15 BETWEEN PAK AMBASSADOR
GHAS UDDIN AHMED AND DEPUTY ASST SECY SOBER (NEA). THE
TWO HAD KNOWN EACH OTHER FROM PERIOD OF SOBER'S SERVICE IN
ISLAMABAD WHEN GHAS, ONE OF PAKISTAN'S SENIORMOST CIVIL
SERVANTS, WAS SERVIING AS DEFENSE SECRETARY.

2. GHAS ACKNOWLEDGED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN OVER PAKISTAN'S
CURRENT DOMESTIC PROBLEMS. HE HAD SEEN THE TROUBLES FIRST-
HAND, HAVING ARRIVED IN TEHRAN ONLY A MONTH AGO FROM PAKIS-
TAN AFTER BHUTTO HAD ASKED HIM TO LEAVE RETIREMENT TO TAKE
OVER THE EMBASSY HERE. HE EXPRESSED THE GREATEST DOUBT OVER
THE COHESIVENESS AND MOTIVATIONS OF THE OPPOSITION ALLIANCE.
FROM HIS DAYS AS DEFENSE SECRETARY, HE HAD PERCEIVED SOME
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TRAITS IN FORMER AIR MARSHAL ASGHAR KHAN (NOW A LEADER OF
THE OPPOSITION) WHICH CAUSED HIS TO FEEL THAT ASGHAR WAS
VERY HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY HIS PERSONAL AMBITIONS. AS
FOR SOME OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS, THEY HAD THE OBCURANTIST
ILLUSION THAT THE COUNTRY WOULD BE BETTER OFF UNDER PRIESTLY
RULE. HE SAW THE NATIONAL AWAMI LEAGUE ELEMENT AS DEVOTED
TO TURNING THE COUNTRY TO A COMMUNIST SYSTEM. THE OPPOSI-

TION'S ONLY COMMON POLICY WAS TO TOPPLE BHUTTO. WITHOUT DEFENDING VARIOUS THINGS BHUTTO HAD DONE, GHAS SAID HIS DEPARTURE IN FACE OF CURRENT PRESSURES WOULD SUBJECT PAKISTAN TO GREAT RISKS.

3. GHAS SAID HE HAD NO EXPLANATION FOR BHUTTO'S ANTI-AMERICAN REMARKS OF THE PAST WEEKS, AND REFERRED NOT TO SPECULATE ON THAT SUBJECT. SOBER OFFERED CATEGORICAL ASSURANCE THAT THERE WAS NOT FACTUAL BASIS FOR ALLEGATIONS THAT USG HAD POURED MONEY INTO PAKISTAN IN SUPPORT OF THE OPPOSITION OR THAT IT HAD DONE OR SUPPORTED ANY OTHER ACT INTENDED TO OUST BHUTTO. THE SECRETARY HAD WRITTEN TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT ALLEGATIONS OF USG INTERFERENCE IN PAKISTAN'S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS WERE FALSE. THE SECRETARY HAD HOPED TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT IN TEHRAN WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AZIZ AHMED DURING COURSE OF THE CENTO SESSION, AND HAD BEEN KEENLY DISAPPOINTED THAT AZIZ HAD NOT COME. HE HAD NOW PROPOSED A MEETING WITH AZIZ DURING THE CIEC MINISTERIAL, AND WE HOPED IT WOULD TAKE PLACE. MEANWHILE, SOBER SAID THE GOP SHOULD KNOW THAT USG STRONGLY RESENTED THE ALLEGATIONS. WE HAD BEEN VERY RESTRAINED IN REACTING THUS FAR, BUT PATIENCE WAS WEARING THIN. HE HOPED THE GOP WOULD RECOGNIZE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION AND THAT IT WOULD HALT ANY FURTHER ANTI-AMERICAN STATEMENTS OR ACTS PROMPTLY. CONTINUATION WOULD MAKE IT PROGRESSIVELY MORE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE THE PRESENT TROUBLE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP, PENDING A HIGH-LEVEL MEETING. HE THOUGH IT IMPORTANT FOR GOP TO UNDERSTAND THIS.

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4. GHAS RESPONDED THAT HE AGREED ENTIRELY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A POSITIVE, COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. SUCH A RELATIONSHIP WAS FUNDAMENTALLY IMPORTANT TO PAKISTAN. IT WOULD MAKE NO SENSE FOR USG TO SEEK TO OUST BHUTTO. HE TOO HAD HOPED THAT AZIZ AHMED AND THE SECRETARY COULD MEET IN TEHRAN DURING THE CENTO SESSION. SUCH A MEETING WOULD HAVE HAD THE GREAT ADVANTAGE OF THE PERSONAL SUPPORT OF THE SHAH, WHO--GHAS KNEW--WAS ALSO MUCH DISTURBED OVER THE CURRENT U.S.-PAK DIFFICULTIES. HE THOUGHT THE SHAH COULD STILL PLAY A USEFUL ROLE BECAUSE OF HIS INTEREST IN THE MATTER AND THE FACT THAT HIS VIEWS WERE OF VERY GREAT IMPORTANCE TO BHUTTO. HE WAS ENCOURAGED TO LEARN THAT THE SUBJECT HAD COME UP DURING THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH THE SHAH. GHAS SAID HE WOULD REPORT HIS CONVERSATION WITH SOBER, EXPLICITLY INCLUDING OUR HOPE THAT THE ANTI-AMERICAN PUBLIC STANCE OF THE GOP WOULD BE HALTED PROMPTLY.

5. COMMENT: BELIEVE AMBASSADOR GHAS UDDIN AHMED, A MAN

WITH REPUTATION FOR HIGH PERSONAL INTEGRITY, IS INDEED MUCH DISTURBED OVER U.S. - PAK TROUBLES AND THAT HE REGRETS BHUTTO'S CURRENT STANCE. BHUTTO HAS EXHIBITED GREAT TRUST IN GHIA IN ASSIGNING HIM TO EMBASSY IN COUNTRY WHICH IS OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE TO PAKISTAN. HOWEVER, GHIA IS CAUTIOUS BY NATURE, HE IS VERY PLEASED WITH HIS PRESENT MISSION, HE HAS NO POLITICAL STANDING BACK HOME, AND HE WILL BE CAREFUL TO DO NOTHING THAT MIGHT ANTAGONIZE BHUTTO. HIS REPORTING OF CONVERSATION DESCRIBED IN THIS MESSAGE CAN BE EXPECTED TO REFLECT THESE FACTORS.

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